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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the school administrator's role in the induction and support of beginning teachers are presented in this paper. Conducted in a school district in southwestern Ontario, Canada, data were derived from interviews with 4 principals who volunteered to develop school-based induction programs in their schools and from focus group discussions with a total of 23 elementary and secondary school principals and vice-principals. The following issues of concern related to teacher induction emerged: (1) balancing the conflicting roles of teacher supporter and evaluator; (2) treading the fine line between development and intervention; (3) encouraging openness while respecting individuality and individualism; (4) responding to the professional development needs of all teaching staff; (5) assisting and supporting new teachers within bureaucratic structures; (6) obtaining guidance and support; and (7) dealing with new teachers' preparedness to teach. Solutions used by administrators are described, some of which included emphasizing teacher-directed development and changing professional interaction norms. Other suggestions are to: improve collaboration between preservice teacher education goals and institutional goals; strengthen the school/district office relationship; and implement more holistic, growth-oriented evaluation policies. (Contains 77 references.) (LMI)

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PROBLEMS AND PARADOXES IN BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT: ISSUES CONCERNING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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> The nature of the person who goes into teaching is. . . often that of someone who wants to help. And, as teachers and department heads, we have been helping students and colleagues. Then, we become a vice-principal or principal and that whole role changes. (Secondary School Principal)

Coming to terms with the dual role of supporter and evaluator of beginning teachers is one of the many challenges facing school administrators. In this article I explore this and other such dilemmas school administrators actively engaged in facilitating the development of beginning teachers are struggling to resolve.

The data informing this writing are taken from information gathered in a qualitative research and development project focused on teacher induction and socialization in one school district in southwestern Ontario, Canada. This article reflects one area of focus in the project--the role of school administrators in the induction and support of beginning teachers; other foci such as workplace relationships and school-based support programs are reported on elsewhere (Cole, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c). In this article, I describe how principals, vice-principals, and department heads perceive and carry out their roles in relation to beginning teacher support and discuss several issues identified by them as problematical and paradoxical. In so doing, I highlight the inherent complexity of the administrator's role in school-based teacher development efforts. Illustrations drawn from practices of four school administrators in different contexts provide some examples of how problems and paradoxes

associated with new teachers support might be addressed. In conclusion, I offer some ideas regarding beginning teacher support and development based on perspectives and practical examples presented in the study and on what we know from relevant literature.

Background and Perspectives Informing the Work

As part of teacher education reform efforts, the attention of major interest groups in the education community--school districts, faculties and schools of education, teachers' federations, and government--has once again focused on the induction or settling in period for new teachers. The impetus for attention to new teachers has arisen partly out of recognition in the field that teaching is becoming increasingly demanding and complex and that new teachers, if they are to remain in the field, require specialized assistance and support in their early years of teaching. Calls for attention to new teachers have also come from those outside schools specifically interested in reforming teacher education. From this perspective, induction is seen as the "key to reform." Attention to beginning teachers, it is thought, will have salutary effects on preservice and inservice teacher education and development (e.g., Fullan & Connelly, 1987). For a variety of reasons, depending on perspective, there is a general recognition that, perhaps now more than ever before, there is a need for change in the kind of entry experiences most new teachers have. Attempts to facilitate new teacher development through formalized support or induction programs have been widespread throughout North America.

In Canada, the setting for this paper, the induction of new teachers is part of the reform agenda in almost every province. In Ontario, for example, a recent survey of induction practices revealed that 89% of 109 school districts had some form of centrally-

sponsored orientation and/or induction program in place, and that 43% of those districts had system-sponsored induction programs that combined a series of workshop activities with a formalized or informal school-based mentoring or support program (Cole & Watson, 1991; in press). There is an increased recognition, in practice and in the literature, of the importance of school-based support for beginning teachers.[1] Much of the literature advocating school-based support efforts identifies, and in some cases defines, the roles of school administrators in new teacher induction and development (e.g., Anders, Centofante, & Orr, 1990; Burden, 1989; Cole, 1991a, 1991b; Cole & Watson, 1991; Crain & Young, 1990; DuFour & Eaker, 1987; Hetlinger, 1986; Hunt, 1968; Hunt & Associates, 1968; Leithwood, 1990, 1992). Also apparent in most of this work is the lack of formalized attention to those roles. The research on which this paper is based was conducted in response to a need for clarification and more in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of school administrators identified in literature on the subject and, more pragmatically, for those in schools involved in beginning teacher support efforts.

Information Sources, Method, and Presentation

As indicated earlier, the information on which this writing is based represents one

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[1] There is a plethora of literature supporting the notion of school-based induction support. More specifically, rationale for this kind of support can be found in four areas of educational literature: work dealing generally with the principles and practices of teacher induction (e.g., Andrews, 1986, 1987; Brooks, 1987; Cole, 1990b; Cole & McNay, 1988; Huling-Austin, 1990; Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edelfelt, 1989; Griffin & Millies, 1987); literature linking teacher development and school improvement (e.g., Fullan, 1985, 1991; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; Lieberman, 1986; Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991; Wideen & Andrews, 1987); work focused on school context and culture (e.g., Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1991; Fullan, 1990; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Heckman, 1987; Little, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1987, 1989; Sarason, 1982); and, research on mentoring (e.g., Bey & Holmes, 1990, 1992; Kilcher, 1989; Little, 1990; Little & Nelson, 1990; Zimpher & Rieger, 1988).

primary area of focus of a larger research and development project focused on new teacher development. For reasons cited earlier plus a dramatic increase in hiring, teacher induction became a priority for the school district in which this project was situated. From 1989-1992 I worked closely with central office and school personnel in two main capacities. As a consultant, I was involved in facilitating the design and development of a centrally sponsored district-wide assistance and support "program" for new teachers that had a strong school-based component. Emphasis was also placed on the role of school administrators in facilitating school-based support. As a researcher, I was able to follow the progress of program development (Cole, 1991a, 1991c) and to explore integrally related issues such as beginning teachers' perceptions and experiences of their first year of teaching (Cole, 1991a, 1991b; Cole & Cathers, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 1992) and workplace relationships and teacher development (Cole, 1991b).

The program development aspect of the project was based on a model of participatory planning (Bach & Morley, 1987); the research component was broadly qualitative. Various methods of information gathering were used depending on the nature and purposes of the sub-project inquiries. Contextual information was gathered in some cases through participation in project activities, in other cases through observations at project sites, and through the use of the methods of "vignettes" and "pre-structured cases" (Miles, 1990). Perceptions and experiences of various project participants (beginning teachers, experienced teachers, administrators, and members of the project planning team) were elicited through individual interviews and/or small group discussions. All field observations were documented and all interviews and discussions were tape recorded and transcribed.

Information forming the basis for this article was gathered in two ways for two different but closely related purposes. Four principals volunteered their schools as "pilot" sites for the development of school-based induction programs. Over the course of two years, three principals (one secondary school and two elementary school) and one elementary school vice-principal focused attention on the provision of new teacher support in their schools with the overall intent of developing guidelines for other schools and school administrators in the district. Their participation involved, in part, a series of between six and eight individual in-depth interviews which focused broadly on their involvement in facilitating new teacher support and on issues, needs, and concerns arising from their efforts. Six secondary school department heads were also involved in group discussions about their roles.

As part of the district-wide focus on defining and supporting school administrators' involvement in new teacher induction, and in an effort to derive a broader-based understanding of how school administrators perceive their role in facilitating new teacher development, 23 elementary and secondary school principals and vice-principals volunteered to participate in one of four focus group discussions. In each two hour discussion the participants considered the following topics in relation to new teacher support: their past and current involvement; perceptions of their roles; beliefs about and attitudes towards teacher development and beginning teacher support; and, issues, needs, and concerns to be addressed over the short and long term. Taken together, the in-depth interviews and group discussions provide both close-up and wide angle perspectives on the role of school administrators in facilitating new teacher development.

Using a method of analysis associated with a qualitative tradition as described, for

example, by Eisner (1991) and Merriam (1988), themes and patterns were identified within each broad topic area and subsequently explored within the context of relevant literature on teacher induction, teacher education and development, and school improvement. An overarching theme emerging from all of the information provided by school administrators was the sometimes paradoxical, sometimes problematic nature of their roles with respect to supporting new teachers.

Following an overview of a rationale for new teacher support, I present a brief summary of how the school administrators variously conceptualize their roles and describe their responsibilities associated with beginning teachers. Then, I turn to an exploration and discussion of the issues which represent to them problems and paradoxes: coming to terms with the dual and somewhat dichotomous roles of helper and evaluator; treading the fine line between intervention and support; responding to needs and concerns of beginning teachers without jeopardizing the professional well-being of other staff; assisting and supporting new teachers within the bureaucratic structures of the school system; respecting individuality and individualism while encouraging openness; obtaining guidance and support in their roles as staff development and school improvement leaders; and, dealing with new teachers' preparedness to teach. I follow with examples of how some school administrators have addressed some of these problems and paradoxes and conclude with recommendations for ways in which the full potential of teacher induction as a vehicle for teacher education reform might be realized.

Why New Teacher Support?

It has been said that teaching is the only profession in which beginners are catapulted

into complex and demanding situations with no organized support system, yet are expected to perform with the fine-tuned expertise of their experienced colleagues. Beginning teachers are generally high achievers, academically well prepared, and keen to provide their students with stimulating and perfectly planned lessons and learning experiences. For the most part, though, their only practical preparation for such a complex and demanding task has been during the practicum component of the preservice program--a short-term, part-time assignment carried out with the assistance and close direction of an experienced teacher or teachers in charge of the classroom or classrooms where preservice teachers are placed. And, as any new teacher will admit, teaching in the practicum situation and teaching in one's own classroom are entirely different experiences.

Unfortunately, new teachers are often confronted by the least desirable teaching assignments their new school can offer and, frequently, they are expected to assume teaching responsibilities for which they are not fully qualified (as in the case of a teacher prepared to teach at the intermediate level being assigned a position in the junior elementary grades). Ill-equipped classrooms in locations isolated from their colleagues, split grades, diverse teaching assignments which require multiple lesson preparation, and responsibility to teach many particularly challenging students are but a few of the realities with which new teachers are expected to cope (Cole & McNay, 1988; Huling-Austin, 1989, 1990; Odell, 1989; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1985). In addition to the primary task of taking direction of their new classroom, beginning teachers are expected, at the same time, to absorb the details of curriculum guides and school procedures, volunteer for extra-curricular duties, and establish themselves in a school and community environment that is likely to be totally unfamiliar to

them (Burke & Heideman, 1985). Accustomed to success and eager to prove their worth, new teachers struggle to manage all that they and others lay before them.

Although eager to push themselves, beginning teachers are often overwhelmed by pressures from all directions. They are dismayed by the number of students whose learning needs demand individual attention, and frustrated by those whose behaviour disrupts the classroom throwing their carefully prepared lessons off course. Support from their colleagues may be haphazard or even non-existent (see, e.g., Bullough, 1989; Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991; Cole & Knowles, 1992).

As Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1991) and Rosenholtz (1987) point out, it is likely that beginning teachers, unfortunate enough to encounter a school with a sink-or-swim attitude towards newcomers, will develop a fear of revealing what they perceive to be their inadequacies. Chances are they will start to isolate themselves even further from their peers, avoiding staffroom contacts and secretly dreading the official visit of the school administrator whose job it is to evaluate their performance (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Little wonder, then, that so many talented young adults abandon the turbulent waters of the teaching profession in search of a calmer and more sheltered professional existence elsewhere. Research conducted in the United States shows that an estimated 30% of beginning teachers leave the profession during their first two years (Schlecty & Vance, 1983). In Canada, a recent national survey indicates that at least ten per cent of beginning teachers find the job is not what they expected and leave within the first three years of qualifying (King & Peart, 1992).

The beginning experience is not always traumatic or short-lived, however. For some new teachers, the first year is a period of professional growth rather than a test of endurance

(see, e.g., Cole, 1991b). The journey of beginning teachers embarking on their careers is nowadays often smoothed by induction programs--planned and formalized systems of assistance and support which enable novices not just to survive but to prosper during their first few years of teaching. And it is becoming increasingly evident that the kind of assistance and support most meaningful to new teachers, and of most benefit to other teaching professionals, takes place within the school setting where immediacy and relevance are taken into account, and where the wider professional development potential of induction programs can be more fully realized.

A school-based approach to new teacher support, however, places additional responsibilities and expectations on school administrators and staff. Principals, as designated school leaders, have not traditionally been involved in the induction process (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). And, as Leithwood (1990) claims, they may have unclear images of teacher development and how they might best facilitate it. The principals, vice-principals, and secondary school department heads involved in the research presented here recognized the importance of facilitating new teachers' induction to teaching and were interested in better understanding their role in such efforts. I turn now to a presentation and discussion of how this group variously conceptualized their roles and responsibilities and characterized their involvement in facilitating new teacher development.

The School Administrator and New Teacher Support

The Principal

> As a principal, . . . when you hire someone you have an interest in their development. . . . There is a responsibility there. . . . I am the educational

leader of their school, so I have a responsibility for their development.

(Secondary School Principal)

As designated school leader, the principal has a key role to play for it is the principal who can initiate work towards the establishment and maintenance of a climate in which teacher support is valued as an integral part of teaching and professional development. For a variety of reasons, principals may or may not be directly involved in the provision of day-to-day support for beginning teachers. For example, many principals have responsibilities to the school district and community which regularly take them away from the school so that they are not always readily available to provide "emergency care" or encouragement when it is most needed. Also, their evaluative role sometimes makes it difficult to establish a nurturing, collegial relationship with beginning teachers (a point to which I will return later in the paper).

Generally, principals might be involved in the provision of new teacher support in the following ways:

- offering overall cohesion and coherence to school-based support efforts;
- working to raise awareness among the experienced staff of the importance of attending to new teachers;
- initiating, facilitating, and orchestrating induction activities (e.g., organizing orientation activities, arranging classroom observations, introducing or matching beginning teachers with experienced resource or support teachers, arranging for release time for special induction activities);
- arranging, where possible, timetables and class assignments with consideration to new

teachers;

- discussing with new teachers the direction of the school and their own philosophy of education and leadership;
- lending emotional support and encouragement to new teachers; and,
- providing information and advice.

The principals in this study primarily conceptualize their role as facilitator to which they attach a high level of importance. They also describe themselves as assuming the varied roles of: liaison; friend; supporter; resource; mentor; guide; cheerleader; injector of humour; one who puts things into perspective and in balance; and, one who adds a touch of realism to idealistic expectations and goals. The role of evaluator is a "thorny issue" for most principals because of the contradiction it presents when placed alongside some of their other roles. This is one of the paradoxical issues to be discussed later.

The Vice-Principal

> A vice-principal is there for support. When a new teacher comes [to you] and says, "Have you got a minute?", you get the coffee out, close the door, and cancel all your appointments because that is probably the most important time you'll spend in the day. (Secondary School Vice-Principal)
>
> [New teacher support] is the key to successful classroom teaching. It makes [new teachers] positive towards their job--if your job isn't pleasant, are you going to work at it very hard? . . . If we want commitment from our staff we have to show them there's something worth committing to. [As an administrator] you're there to provide support so. . .they want to come back, they want to give more to it. It's a small

investment for a long-term pay-off. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

Often, it is the vice-principal who assumes primary responsibility for the provision of assistance and support to new teachers. Because, for a variety of reasons, vice-principals usually have the most ongoing direct contact with new teachers, the roles of "support lender" and "problem solver," formally or informally, have been added to their list of responsibilities. Vice-principals recognize the importance of this kind of responsibility and welcome opportunities to interact in myriad ways with beginning teachers. Designating teacher induction as a special responsibility not only decreases the chances of new teachers "falling through the cracks" but also gives an overall coherence and importance to teacher support and professional growth.

> You get to know [the new teachers]. You have lots of communication--even if it's spontaneous, social kinds of communication. [You] check with them often, even if you're just going down the hall. And, while you're doing that, you're trying to analyze all the time what their needs are, what are their wishes (as far as involvement [goes]). [You] make yourself available to them on an informal basis so that when they have questions they're comfortable about that. You need to be approachable so that they don't feel they're imposing on you. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

A number of vice-principals in the group discussions were relatively new to administration. Being new themselves and struggling to find their way in a new position and school, they empathized with beginning teachers. They recalled their own early classroom experiences and indicated an eagerness to provide whatever help they can to newcomers.

> I think we all remember our first year. I can't remember my second, third, or

fourth years as well but . . . I can still remember vividly some crucial days in my first year. That first year was really quite traumatic. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

I remember what it was like. . . when I came in [to teaching]. . . in times which were much gentler than they are today. I know the problems that I experienced, and I had very little fall-back support. Times are much more difficult [now] for new teachers and they need all the help and support we can give them. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

When I started [teaching] I quickly realized how isolating teaching can be. . . . You can be in your classroom, in the stockroom, [you can] go about your daily [practice] and not have much contact with others. It's really appreciated when a fellow staff member, vice-principal or principal not only talks to you in the hall, but [now and again] pops into the classroom. I never did see it as a threat, I saw it as "Great! Here's someone to support me!" (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

The vice-principals repeatedly commented on the supportive nature of their role, how they regularly were called on to act as a "buffer zone," and how often they tried to help beginning teachers put back into perspective issues and problems that had become distorted and overwhelming. In the kind of nurturing and support role that vice-principals saw themselves playing, the issue of evaluation also presented them with a dilemma. They, like principals, also have responsibilities related to teacher evaluation. And, like principals, they

experience a tension related to this role. Although this issue is discussed in a later section, the following quote illustrates the point:

> When you're talking to [new teachers], you're still viewed as the vice-principal and [an] authority-type figure (although you don't maybe view yourself that way). You have to be sensitive to how they relate to you, and be able to give them the feeling that they can come to you for help. [You don't want them to take what you say] as the definitive law or rule [of] the school. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

The Department Head

In the secondary school, it is the department head who perhaps assumes the most critical role in terms of the actual delivery of, and direct involvement in, induction activities. This is due to the structure of the secondary school, the department head's responsibilities to facilitate professional growth, and because part of the department head's timetable is set aside for facilitory or coordinating responsibilities. A secondary school principal describes the role of the department head in this way:

> The role of the department head is to make certain that the prescribed curriculum is understood by the teacher, is delivered by the teacher on schedule, and that the new teacher's work is coordinated with other people in the department. . . . So, although the department head's main responsibility would be to curriculum, I would expect [it] to go beyond this to [include supporting] the new teacher induction team [at the school level]. (Secondary School Principal)

Like many of the vice-principals, the department heads referred to their own early experiences to explain their interest in and commitment to new teacher support. For example, one explained her position as follows:

> This is the first time I've had a new teacher in my department. Remembering my history [with other] boards, that I didn't get the support that I would like to have had. . .I felt particularly keen on making myself available to [the new teacher]. . . . I said to myself, "I don't want [what happened to me] to happen to her.". . . It was really important that she know that I am available and I'm there to support her and help her whenever I can. (Secondary School Department Head)

Department heads in one school identified the following ways in which they were involved in new teacher support:

- creating a climate of support within the department, and encouraging attitudes and practices of helping and sharing;
- being available by telephone for after-hours support and for consultation over the summer before classes start;
- orienting new teachers to the school and department layout, policy, procedures, routines, and the like;
- offering daily, immediate support (often of a technical, detailed, or subject-specific nature);
- coordinating inter- or intra-department work groups;
- providing coverage to allow teachers to visit other classrooms;

- coordinating schedules to allow time to regularly meet with new teachers;
- requesting that new teachers' classes be located close to those of helpful experienced colleagues; and,
- making appropriate class assignments and, where possible, allocating a reduced workload.

Problems and Paradoxes

Despite an obvious interest in and commitment to new teacher support, from the analysis of conversations with school administrators, there repeatedly emerged a number of issues related to teacher induction that appear to be ongoing sources of tension and concern. They reflect certain realities associated with new teacher support. In this section I present and discuss each of these issues in the context of relevant literature. Later I give examples of how some administrators have addressed them.

Assistance versus Assessment

The comment made by the secondary school principal in the opening of the paper reflects one of the most challenging dilemmas facing school administrators: coming to terms with the dual role of supporter and evaluator of beginning teachers. Some administrators find it difficult to accept the reality and implications of being perceived as the supervisor or evaluator when they prefer to be perceived in a helping role. This principal illustrates:

> The assistance I thought I was providing the new teachers sometimes was not being picked up as that. They saw me as the person who was going to observe them to determine whether they will be given a permanent contract even though I thought I was working with them on a supportive level.

(Secondary School Principal)

Related to this is the challenge of trying to be a helper and evaluator simultaneously. A vice-principal explains:

> We have to see our new teachers [for evaluation purposes] twice before November 30th, and that's a really threatening situation for them. . . . It's really important that we don't come in just as administrators. . . . [Although] we're evaluating, we [also] are there for their growth. [It's important that they understand that] as teachers starting in, their first year will be full of opportunities for growth. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

An elementary school principal sums up the reality of the situation in a single statement: "Once you are on the other side of the desk there is no denying it, you <u>are</u> the boss.

The assistance-assessment dilemma articulated by these administrators is well recognized in the literature. Induction programs based on an assistance model acknowledge the complexity of teaching and the individuality of the teacher. They treat professional development as an ongoing process facilitated through self-assessment and reflective practice and with attention to personal and professional support. Evaluation, other than self-assessment and constructive or formative feedback, is not part of this kind of induction process. (New teacher support in this school district and in most Canadian schools is based on an assistance model.)

Teachers who know they are being evaluated or who see their "helper" also as an evaluator are less likely to take risks, ask questions, or seek help. As Scriven (1988) maintains:

> Without this separation [of assistance and assessment], it is unreasonable to expect teachers to go to formative advisors about their weaknesses. One might as well expect clients to seek advice from attorneys who are doubling as judges on the same case. (p. 114-115)

Responsibilities associated with certification or contractual matters are typically assumed by those not directly involved in the provision of induction support and assistance, either mentor or support teachers (Neal, 1992; Odell, 1990) or, in some cases, university teacher educators (McEvoy & Morehead, 1987). Neal (1992) points out that the term "evaluator," or adjectives associated with that role, is not one typically used to characterize the functions of a mentor or support person. Terms such as "supporter," "confidant," "guide," "advisor," and "encourager," which all assume the existence of a level of trust and safety, more often characterize the relationship between a novice and experienced teacher in a supportive role.

The problem for the principals and vice-principals in this study is that the evaluative role they must perform as part of their administrative responsibilities is at odds with the support role they wish to assume. They stand, according to how Neal (1992) distinguishes these roles, with one foot at either end of a continuum of teacher development activities. Goodlad (1984) argues that as much as they would like it to be otherwise, principals cannot be both an instructional leader and an evaluator. This is precisely the dilemma faced by this group of principals and vice-principals. And for them, and others like them, it is a dilemma for which there is no easy resolution.

Treading the Fine Line between Development and Intervention

The problem of judging when to intervene for the benefit of the new teacher, the

students, and the school presents another challenge.

> I'm always in a quandary about how to give the [new teachers] enough room to establish themselves and do the things they want to do, and not give them the feeling that I'm standing over top of them. I want to be able to guide them but I don't want it to be a "sink or swim" situation. It's difficult to always keep an eye on things and know when it is time to give a little assistance or advice and when to let [something] go a bit longer to see what happens. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

This statement could be made by anyone in a facilitory role. It well captures the ongoing dilemma inherent in any experiential learning situation. In the beginning teacher development literature, the pressure-support tension is often articulated in relation to mentoring roles (Head, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1992; Shulman & Colbert, 1987; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992). This tension is exacerbated, however, when the person assuming a facilitory function also has wider accountability concerns. As this principal indicates, there can be an urgency to a situation where immediate and direct intervention is required:

> In a situation where the [beginning teacher] is really struggling, you have to get a plan of action in place fairly quickly because if something is not done then the students are suffering. How much they are suffering will determine how quickly you have to move. So, as a result of that type of role, . . .certainly the principal is not going to be seen as the friendly person who has come in to help out. (Secondary School Principal)

An elementary school principal further illustrates how difficult it is to walk the line

between facilitating development through experience and using direct intervention:

> [One beginning teacher] didn't want to take my advice. I would give her suggestions of pitfalls that were lying out there but she continued to follow on down the road and, as a result, after about two months in the job she was in a lot of trouble. . . . I found it extremely challenging and a major dilemma. (Elementary School Principal)

One elementary school vice-principal identified a role for the beginning teacher in addressing the issue. She reflects on the importance of communication between administrators and beginning teachers, and on the role of beginning teachers in determining the nature and extent of the help and support they need:

> The first year is a delicate year. You don't want to treat [the beginning teachers] like babies; they are professionals. Some of them want to learn from experience and not always have someone there to grab them before they fall flat on their face. . . . Sometimes it's hard to know when to let them alone and when to help. It's critical to set up an honest communication system so that they can help you [gauge that]. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

According to this administrator, it is important to develop a relationship with beginning teachers based on mutual trust and respect. Given the hierarchical nature of the relationship between administrators and beginning teachers, and the especially vulnerable position in which beginning teachers are placed because of their probationary status, the development of such a relationship is another challenging and complex process.

The development of collegial relationships, both among teachers and between teachers

and administrators, is as much of an organizational issue as an interpersonal one as the literature on school culture indicates (e.g., Heckman, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Little, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989). The creation of a work context conducive to help seeking and risk taking is required so that beginning teachers feel sufficiently secure to be open and honest with their superiors. Principals (and other administrators) have an important role in the creation of such a context (Barth, 1990; Cole, 1991a, 1991b; Fullan, 1988; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991). This vice-principal describes the challenge and goal of mutual acceptance and support:

> We need to accept the fact that a new teacher, any teacher, is always learning. We need to both support one another and accept support. Once we can accept support we're more apt to give support. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

Encouraging Openness while Respecting Individuality and Individualism

> There are different types of new teachers. Some are very quiet and feel that by coming to you they are stating that they are having difficulty when they're not. You have to approach them and ask about specific things otherwise they won't say anything to you. Others are more vocal and will come right out and say that they are having problems. You have to know the personality types of the teachers and work with the different types [accordingly]. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

> Teachers come into the profession with different sensitivity levels. We really need to practice with our staff members what we ask them to do with our kids:

> lots of praise, positive reinforcement, encouragement, being there to listen, being honest. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

Administrators recognize the need to be sensitive and responsive to teachers' individual differences: to different personalities and working styles; to the teacher who prefers to work alone in the classroom; to the teacher who appears not to heed advice; and, to the quiet or shy teacher. At the same time, they are mindful that beginning teachers may hesitate about asking for help or indicating that they need it, or that they may cover up problems or concerns feeling that to admit them would be to reveal inadequacies (Cole & Knowles, 1992; Neal, 1992). And, new teachers are even more likely to insulate themselves from their superiors (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985).

It is often the case as well that the problems that are the most pressing are those for which beginning teachers are most hesitant to seek advice. A vice-principal comments on this issue with respect to classroom discipline, an area identified as a significant concern for beginning teachers (Cole & Cathers, 1992; Odell, 1989; Veenman, 1984):

> Some new teachers. . .may need more support than others but for all of them there's a point in the year when [discipline] is a problem. This is a stressful time [for new teachers]. . . . But the big problem is that they feel they're being "marked down" if they send kids to the office. They feel that's in some way a failure on their part. [I] take a lot of time to say, "Look, we've all been through the first year. It's fine. That's what I'm here for. We'll help you in any way we can. (Secondary School Vice-Principal)

So, school administrators are faced with the problem of how to communicate a

climate of support and encourage beginning teachers to ask questions and seek help without appearing to criticize or interfere with certain preferred work styles and behaviour. Similarly, they need to be careful not to discourage those who are more openly inquisitive and interested in engaging in collegial relationships.

Responding to the Professional Development Needs of All Teaching Staff

Principals are mindful of their role as staff developers. Also aware of the special needs of new teachers, they struggle to attend appropriately to new teachers without jeopardising the development and professional well-being of others in the school. They face a number of problems related to this dilemma, some structural and some attitudinal. For example, they are aware of the need to find ways to avoid overburdening experienced teachers with mentoring responsibilities or with tasks that have not been assigned to new teachers in an attempt to lighten their workload. Even though they are aware that it is both within their authority and of benefit to beginning teachers to make structural modifications in class assignments, workload, and extra-curricular responsibilities, they are also aware that such modifications may present problems for others on staff. Two principals express their predicament:

> At whose expense can the new teacher be given a particular timetable [for example]? . . . There are other teachers who need to have good experiences in the classroom as well. . . . Everyone needs support from first year to 97th. (Secondary School Principal)
>
> Sometimes [by asking experienced teachers to help out] you feel you're putting more responsibility on those . . . who already have a fair bit on their plate

> [but] you know that they have dealt with certain students and have a good handle on how best to work with them. (Elementary School Principal)

What often happens, the principals suggest, is that they end up assuming many of the added responsibilities in order to maintain a level of fairness. As one elementary principal remarked, "You can't force teachers to do anything, you can only set the tone and an example. You have to be careful not to wear out the older teachers and not to seem to show favouritism."

The principals also have to deal with attitudinal barriers to new teacher support put up by some teachers in their schools. Without appearing to show favouritism, they work hard at encouraging those resistant to helping and at instilling a spirit of collegiality. It is also difficult to work with those exhibiting the "I survived it" syndrome, those who see the first year of teaching as a rite of passage. This principal describes the sentiments of some experienced teachers towards induction activities:

> [Now that] we have more people involved [in new teacher support] and more opportunities in the school year to talk about induction activities. . .there is a degree of envy out there among some of the teachers who have more than eight years experience, who do not have positions of responsibility and who do not know the facilities and resources of this system as well as do the new teachers. (Secondary School Principal)

Again, the administrators are faced with a dilemma embedded in issues of school culture. While they can make the kind of structural provisions for new teachers suggested in the literature (Cole, 1990a; Cole & Cathers, 1992; Huling-Austin, 1989), unless they are

able to overcome attitudinal barriers and are successful in fostering norms of collegiality, such well-intended actions may be misconstrued or even backfire. As Johnson (1990) observes, "Even when the schedule is right and time is sufficient, distrust, disrespect, and dissension can undermine collaboration" (p. 178). In contrast is the kind of work context described by Gherke (1987) where " a group of teachers, administrators, and support staff members in a school who have been helped themselves to such a degree and in such ways that they will see helping as an inherent part of their roles with newcomers and oldtimers" (p. 110). In this latter kind of environment fairness and competition for favour and resources are non-issues.

Assisting and Supporting New Teachers within the Bureaucratic Structures of School Systems

Related to the problems of overcoming structural and attitudinal barriers within schools are similar problems reflective of the broader bureaucratic structure of school systems. The administrators in the study identified some major obstacles to providing more satisfying induction experiences for new teachers which they believe to be beyond their control and influence.

In order to provide opportunities for new teachers to become oriented to the school and classroom and to adequately prepare for their first assignment, and in order for class assignments and schedules to be made with new teachers in mind, hiring needs to take place sufficiently early. More often than not, vacancies and new appointments are made just prior to or even after the beginning of the school year. This presents obvious problems for both beginning teachers and school administrators since neither has any time to prepare. A secondary school principal expresses his frustration:

> Somehow we have to find a way to provide these [new] teachers with a lightened workload so that things are more manageable for them. . . . [One new teacher at my school] inherited an horrendous timetable. By the time everything had trickled down and somebody finally said, "I have a position here," [that] position had a very difficult timetable. . . . If we could identify our new people in time so that we could provide them with a reasonable timetable, I think that would be beneficial for them. (Secondary School Principal)

Policies and practices of hiring new teachers mid-year and on a temporary, limited contract basis present administrators with additional problems. Also, they often are forced to assume a more directive and reactive, rather than supportive and facilitory, role with these beginning teachers.

Adequacy of financial resources to support induction activities is another issue. Recent budget cutbacks, as a result of a recent economic recession, have had an impact on options for new teacher support activities. With little money available for additional resources or release time to allow beginning teachers to engage in induction activities such as observing in other teachers' classrooms, administrators either have to assume the responsibility themselves or not provide such professional development opportunities. These are what Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) call classical organizational dilemmas associated with the middle management position of principals who are always trying to best serve both the teachers in their school and the senior administrators in central office.

Obtaining Guidance and Support

It should come as no surprise that school administrators also feel the need for guidance and support as they assume and carry out responsibilities related to teacher development and school improvement. The following are some specific needs expressed by the school administrators in this study:

- receiving feedback from new teachers about the support offered them;
- having a clear idea of the school district's position and mandate regarding support for beginning teachers;
- participating in inservice professional development activities in specific areas (e.g., documenting teacher performance and assisting with professional growth plans); and,
- having opportunities to meet with other administrators to discuss issues related to teacher induction.

These concerns are echoed and discussed in literature on the principalship. For example, Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991), and Sarason (1971) comment on the loneliness of the principal's role. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) also point out that usually principals receive little assistance from central administrators with respect to the implementation of new programs.

Very often school administrators are victims of the very kind of work conditions that they are striving to change for the teachers in their schools. And, like new teachers, they cover up or hesitate to share their fears and concerns, and have little chance but to sink or swim:

When we were new [vice-principals] it was not much different than it is for

> new teachers. Remember when we all got together that first time? "How's everything?" "Fine. No problems." And then, on the way home in the car, you thought, "Oh, if they only knew." (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

Dealing with new Teachers' Preparedness to Teach

Finally, new teachers' level of preparedness for the realities of the classroom is a concern that continues to plague administrators and new teachers alike. Administrators question both the initial selection practices by which prospective teachers are admitted to preservice programs, and the focus and content of the preparation programs themselves:

> With a greater emphasis on academic preparation for colleges of education, we're missing the candidates who would be able to come into the classroom as more rounded teachers. The [new teachers] have lots of energy and strong academic backgrounds but have a hard time interacting with the students and relating to those who experience academic difficulties. I would like to see the new teachers with more of a sense that they are working with young people than [that] they're teaching a subject. My concern is that so much of their preservice training is academic and so little of it is based on relationships. (Secondary School Principal)

These are not new concerns. They have been voiced repeatedly in teacher education reform literature across the country and beyond (e.g., Bowman, 1990; Fullan & Connelly, 1987; Tuinman & Brayne, 1988; New Brunswick Commission on Excellence in Education, 1992) and are currently at the heart of teacher education reform efforts in Ontario and elsewhere. Nevertheless, because reform is slow and incredibly complex, it will take time for efforts to

be realized at the level of the school. In the meantime, school administrators continue to hire and work with teachers who need more guidance than they feel should be required.

It is also clear from their comments that these administrators recognize that the kind of change required must reflect the shared interest and responsibility of both faculties of education and schools:

> We need closer contact with our faculties of education to make sure that people coming out have a more realistic picture of what teaching is all about. [Teaching] has changed in the last few years since we started. We need that kind of contact so that we're setting up [new teachers] for success not failure. (Elementary School Vice-Principal)

Toward Resolution

The paradoxical nature of the issues and concerns identified by the school administrators in this study reflect certain realities associated with new teacher support and development. An acknowledgement and discussion of the problems and concerns they identify serve to highlight the complex nature of teacher education and development and the need to find productive ways of engaging all partners in the process of teacher education reform. And while there are no easy or fast solutions to these persistent problems, focused attention on facilitating new teacher support in their respective contexts afforded four school administrators opportunities to better understand and deal with some of the complexities associated with facilitating beginning teacher development in the workplace. They provide important insights into some of the issues.

Learnings from Four School Administrators

The problems and paradoxes discussed above were issues for all four administrators; however, the extent of the concerns varied across contexts and individuals, and mostly lessened over time. School culture and leadership style were critical factors contributing to and/or helping to resolve most of the dilemmas, particularly those associated with evaluation, intervention, fairness, and sensitivity to individual differences. For these four administrators, facilitating new teacher support was (and is) integrally connected to the broader issue of school-wide professional development. Providing beginning teachers with a facilitative induction to teaching in all cases meant significant changes within the schools. In some cases, the changes involved reallocation of space, time, and resources; in others, changes represented challenges to traditional isolationist norms and patterns of professional interaction. It is this latter kind of change that seems fundamental to the realization of the broad potential of teacher induction and to diminishing the problematic and paradoxical nature of school administrators' roles.

Three of the administrators explicitly addressed the tension created by the dual role of helper and evaluator. Two focused attention on reconceptualizing evaluation practices and their role in the process by placing emphasis on ongoing teacher-directed development and by increasing their amount of "informal" time spent in classrooms. Both administrators described the importance of their presence in the classroom being seen as "natural." One indicated her belief that given time, opportunity, and appropriate emotional support, [all] teachers will feel freer to identify and attend to their own professional development needs. The third administrator, for whom the evaluator/support tension provided difficulties, chose

to accept the "evaluator" role and shift primary responsibility for various kinds of ongoing support to others in the school "much better placed to assume a supportive role and respond to [beginning teachers'] needs."

Involving others in support roles often means a change in professional interaction patterns and norms. All four administrators stressed the importance of modelling and encouraging collegiality and working together. For some, this meant challenging well-established norms of individualism, a task defined by one as "like pulling teething." Building a culture of community in which people naturally work together, support one another, and share ideas and responsibilities is a major facilitator of beginning teacher development with significant benefits for all involved (see, Cole, 1991b). The four administrators involved in developing school-based support programs spent considerable time creating formal and informal opportunities for teachers (new and experienced) to work together.

For example, in one school classrooms were clustered according to grade level or subject area to afford better opportunities for teachers to work together and help one another. Also, opportunities for teachers to informally exchange ideas were provided at regularly arranged lunch-time and after-school "conversation" sessions. Holding staff meetings in different classrooms on a rotating basis and devoting time at those meetings to sharing information and ideas from any professional development activity or event in which a teacher might be involved are other ways administrators have tried to encourage more professional interaction.

Another principal whose efforts to "lessen isolationism" met with considerable initial

resistance created "non-negotiable" opportunities for teachers to observe in other classrooms within the school. Even though this meant that she had to cover the visiting teacher's class, it is her belief that teachers need to experience the benefits of working with others and that it is her responsibility as principal to create opportunities for those benefits to be realized. Over time, this principal came to define her role in relation to new teacher support as encouraging (new and experienced) teachers to work together and support one another rather than assuming full and direct responsibility for the provision of new teacher assistance and support herself (as she initially did).

One administrator gave an example of how efforts to encourage joint work among teachers unexpectedly paid off. At the request of some experienced teachers, a series of professional development activities initially arranged for beginning teachers in the school was expanded to include all staff interested in attending.

> [Over the course of the sessions] one of our most experienced Grade 1 teachers latched on to one of our beginning Grade 1 teachers. When it came time [later on] to set out their goals for professional opportunities for growth [a district-sponsored individualized professional development plan], she chose the beginning teacher as her mentor! It was a shock to me although I didn't let on. [When we talked about it], she said, "I just wanted to take advantage of all these new ideas fresh out of teachers' college and the enthusiasm this person has to share.

Those administrators working in schools not used to high levels of professional collegiality and collaborative work acknowledge that change in interaction patterns is slow to develop but worth continual encouragement. They see an emphasis on new teacher support

as one important vehicle for such change. As one principal remarked, "There is greater awareness among other staff people that we do have a greater responsibility to help new teachers get established." This greater awareness and acceptance combined with a gradual increase in the number of new teachers who, themselves, have had supportive induction experiences contribute over the long term to a reorientation of professional workplace norms. When helping, sharing, supporting, and working together become the accepted way of doing things; that is, the natural way for people to relate to and work with one another, many of the dilemmas identified by the school administrators in this study become non-issues.

Moving Ahead

I conclude with some thoughts that, if given further consideration, might move us closer toward resolution of the dilemmas presented in this article.

- Dilemmas associated with administrators' perceptions of new teachers' lack of preparedness to teach might be resolved through concerted efforts, on the part of schools and faculties of education, to improve communication and collaboration, especially in relation to goals and expectations associated with preservice teacher education and the roles each institution might appropriately assume at various points along a career-long continuum of teacher education and development.
- Obstacles to new teacher development created by the bureaucratic structure of school systems might be overcome with the strengthening of relationships between schools and school district central offices and the development of a set of mutual goals reflecting a commitment to teacher development and school improvement.
- Dilemmas presented by teachers' reluctance to seek assistance or voice concerns and by

anxiety associated with evaluation might be resolved through attention to prevailing leadership norms and practices and established patterns of professional interaction both in schools and in the profession at large. Also helpful would be efforts to rethink evaluation policies and practices both at school and district levels so that they are more holistic and growth-oriented and involve both teachers and administrators in a process of shared responsibility and decision making. A focus on building work and learning environments that encourage rather than dissuade risk taking would also help to reconceptualize the role of school administrators.

Perhaps most important is the need for new teacher support and development to be a natural part of school practice so that it does not appear as an aberration and is not seen as creating additional responsibilities for teachers and administrators.

Attention to beginning teachers has been called the "key to reform" (e.g., Fullan & Connelly, 1987; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991). There is little doubt that providing facilitative experiences for beginning teachers is a good thing. The administrators in this study, like many others, are committed to the idea of beginning teacher support, and are actively involved in facilitating various induction opportunities. Yet, many are frustrated by the dilemmas they face and the dim prospect of their resolution.

As school districts continue to move toward site-based management and as increased emphasis is placed on school-university partnerships, more and more responsibility for initial and ongoing teacher education is falling on the shoulders of school administrators. For the most part, administrators are expected to assume that responsibility with little or no guidance and support, and with minimal opportunity to acquire knowledge of the rationale for or long

term implications of such school-based initiatives. Because substantive change takes time and commitment, and commitment itself requires time to develop, school administrators as overburdened "middle managers" are able to do little more than try to implement policies and practices and struggle to resolve associated dilemmas.

Complex issues such as those identified here need to be addressed if substantive change is to, indeed, take place; however, without appropriate levels of support and involvement to allow such consideration, reform efforts such as those focusing on beginning teachers are likely to remain "just some more good ideas." This article is an attempt to raise awareness of some issues concerning school administrators and encourage and provide some direction for their consideration.

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